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FEUDALISM IN ENGLAND AND RUSSIA

Suggestions for a Comparative Study of Early English and Muscovite Political and Social Institutions

THE great majority of the classical Russian historians, for instance, Klyuchevsky and Platonov, were inclined to treat Russian history as an entirely independent subject of scientific research. They were of the opinion that the political and social development of Russia had been basically different from that of any other European country. Therefore they argued that no conclusions of any scientific value could be arrived at by a comparative study of Russian and West European history. We believe that these ideas, as based on preconceived theories and an insufficient knowledge of facts, are absolutely erroneous, and that the most urgent task of Russian historical science is to make Russian history fit into the general scheme of European history. Isolated attempts in this direction were made before the Revolution, for instance, by Pavlov-Silvansky, and, more recently, by some of the Marxist historians, such as Rozhkov and Pokrovsky, but on the whole their works had only a very limited influence on the general development of Russian historical thought.

In this connection it seems that a comparison between the early English and the early Russian institutions offers a special interest, and would yield much more valuable results than a comparison between Russia and many other European countries. Indeed, the starting point in the historical development of these two countries was approximately the same. The earliest historical records show us that at the dawn of history both England and Russia lived in a *tribal* state of political and social organisation. Such was not the case in France, where the Frankish invasions were preceded by several centuries of Roman civilisation, which left a very deep impression on subsequent French history. It is quite possible that the French school of historians, as represented by Fustel-de-Coulanges¹ and his disciples,² had a tendency to minimise the effects of the Frankish invasions and to exaggerate the importance of the Roman influence. Nevertheless, it remains true that such basic institutions as the French domainal system and the French serfdom are intimately connected with, and deeply rooted in, the Roman

¹ Fustel-de-Coulanges : *Histoire des Institutions Politiques de l'Ancienne France*, 6 vols., in-8°, Paris (several editions).

² See, for instance, Henri Sée : *Les classes rurales et le régime domanial en France au Moyen-Age*, in-8°, Paris, 1901.

land-holding system, the Roman colonate, etc. This had not been the case in England. Indeed, although this country had also formed a part of the Roman Empire, the events which took place after the departure of the Roman legions considerably undermined the effects of Roman influence, at least on the social and political organisation of England, and in this respect English history started afresh after the landing of the Anglo-Saxons in this island.

But, although the starting points in the historical development of England and Russia were the same, chronologically there existed a very wide gap between them. English history began in the middle of the 5th century; and the landing of the half-mythical Hengist and Horsa at Ebbsfleet in or about 449, which started the series of Anglo-Saxon invasions, can be taken as a convenient landmark for the beginning of modern English history. The first Russian principalities were formed in the second half of the 9th century and their creation is closely connected with the eastward drive of the Vikings,³ who also landed in England several decades later. But, whereas the Vikings in England encountered the stubborn resistance of the West Saxon kingdoms which at that time had already existed for several centuries, in Russia they found much more primitive conditions.⁴ The first half-mythical Viking, Rurik, who came to Russia and is said to have created the principality of Novgorod, is now thought to have been none other than the Duke of Frisia, Hroerek Skjöldung, who is also well known to West European annals.⁵ But the part played by this Rurik-Hroerek in Russia in the 9th century is only comparable to that played by Hengist and Horsa in England in the 5th century. Thus, from the very outset of history, there was a difference of approximately 400 years between England and Russia, and this difference was substantially maintained for many centuries, in fact, at least up to the beginning of the 17th century. This could have happened only because, during most of the Middle Ages, Russia had only very intermittent relations with the more progressive West European countries. When, at the close of the 16th century, Giles Fletcher visited the Muscovite State, he was greatly surprised by the peculiarities of Muscovite life and

³ See, for instance, T. D. Kendrick: *A History of the Vikings*, in-8°, London, 1930.

⁴ Klyuchevsky was of a different opinion; the new theory, according to which very primitive conditions prevailed in Russia in the middle of the 9th century, was first presented by Presnyakov. See A. Presnyakov: *The princes' law in old Rus*, in-8°, St. Petersburg, 1909.

⁵ See N. T. Beliaev: "Rorik of Jutland and Rurik of the Russian Annals," in *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, vol. III, Prague, 1929.

political organisation, and he gave vent to his indignation at the barbaric customs of the Muscovites in his well-known description of the " Russe Commonwealth."⁶ If, by some miracle, it had been possible for a contemporary of Henry II, or of John Lackland, to visit the court of Tsar Fedor, he would have felt much more at home in Moscow than the enlightened envoy of Queen Elizabeth.

Definition of Feudalism.

The most important development in the social history of England from the 5th to the 11th century is the gradual transformation of the primitive tribal organisation into what is called feudal structure. The same general process of gradual feudalisation takes place in Russia from the 9th to the 15th century.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, a brief definition of feudalism should now be given. Feudalism is characterised by a system of individual landholding, in which the owners of land, in addition to their proprietary rights, also exercise certain political, administrative and judicial rights over their lands and the population of them, the cultivation of lands so owned being carried on by a peasantry entirely or partially dependent on the landlords. This constitutes what might be called the " manorial " or social aspect of feudalism. The other important aspect of feudalism—what might be called its " seigneurial " or political aspect—is that certain governmental functions are not carried out by the central political authority of the country, but are exercised by local potentates who are at the same time big landholders. The unity of the State is achieved only by the tie of vassalage or feudal allegiance connecting the various ranks of landholders between themselves and with the central political authority in a more or less complex system of lords and vassals. These two elements of feudalism can sometimes exist separately, but only of countries in which the social and the political elements exist simultaneously and are intimately connected, shall we say that they offer a typical feudal structure.

Social Aspects of Feudalism.

- (a) *Townships and manors in England ; communal lands and " votchiny " in Muscovy.*

Now it is scarcely necessary to demonstrate that England under Edward the Confessor presented all the essential characteristics of

⁶ Giles Fletcher : *Of the Russe Common Wealth, or maner of gouvernement by the Russe Emperour*, London, 1591. (Numerous later editions in English and Russian.)

feudalism, in accordance with our definition, although this might have been questioned by those older historians who thought that the elements of feudalism were first brought over from France to England by the Norman conquest and were artificially transplanted on to English soil by the Conqueror and his Norman followers. Let us consider whether the corresponding elements can be found in Russia. Perhaps the most striking fact of Russia's social history during the period 900 to 1500 is the gradual disappearance of free communal landholding and the gradual growth of privileged individual landownership, both lay and ecclesiastical—the "growth of the manor," or of the "votchina," to use the corresponding Russian term. Without entering into a detailed discussion whether the English expressions "folkland" and "bookland" are the exact synonyms of the Russian terms "black" and "white" land, it nevertheless remains true that they were applied to the same two great categories of land, and that both in England and in Russia, as time went on, "bookland" gained preponderance over "folkland." The only difference may be seen in this—that in Russia "black" lands never disappeared entirely—a large amount of these "black" lands, located in the northern part of the country, having remained unappropriated by privileged landowners, so that the principle *nulle terre sans seigneur*, which prevailed in England after the Norman Conquest, never completely triumphed in Russia.

These "black" lands in Northern Russia offered during the 16th and 17th centuries the same essential characteristics as other "black" lands which had existed in Central Russia during the early part of the Russian Middle Ages before their appropriation by privileged landowners. A detailed study of the organisation of these lands, black or communal, in which the primitive tribal arrangements had been gradually replaced by a territorial grouping of a free peasantry, shows many striking similarities with the organisation of free English townships during the earlier part of the Saxon period. Not only was the grouping of the population into hamlets, townships and shires approximately the same in both countries; not only was the population of these hamlets and townships enjoying very similar forms of rudimentary self-government both in England and in Russia; not only were the methods of cultivation very much alike; but the striking feature is that the peculiarities of land tenure were also very much the same. Waste, forests, and pastures were generally regarded as common lands. But of far greater significance was the fact that the cultivated lands were held by the members of townships accord-

ing to a special system, which both English and Russian historians have called "shareholding"—this "shareholding" principle governing to a certain extent all social relations within the township.⁷

Many of my readers are certainly familiar with the modern Russian communal organisation called the "mir." For a long time it was admitted that this particular system of landholding was a very antique institution and that it was peculiar solely to Russia, so much so that it was thought to have been an embodiment of fundamental and unalterable psychological characteristics of the Russian nation.⁸ Later on it was proved that the Russian "mir" in its modern form had a fairly recent origin, which did not go beyond the latter part of the 17th century.⁹ But it had been preceded by another form of communal organisation, which is precisely the "shareholding" township, the transition from the older to the more recent form having been mainly brought about as an indirect consequence of certain fiscal measures of the government. Anyhow it is interesting to note that the antecedents of an institution which had been considered to be an exclusively Russian form of landholding were very similar to the corresponding English institution during the Saxon period.

The gradual development of privileged individual landownership in Russia proceeded along the same general lines as in England. The gradual transition from tribal to territorial arrangements brought about the creation of principalities in ever-increasing numbers, and the settlement of the princes and their military followers. A great part of the privileged landed property was created by princely grants, as a result of administrative and military requirements and the incapacity of the central authorities to carry out these functions in a more direct way. Moreover, some of these properties were due to the direct colonising activities of the upper classes, which can be described as an application to farming of a

⁷ For England see, for instance, Sir Paul Vinogradov: *Growth of the Manor*, in-8°, Oxford, 1905, and for Russia, M. M. Bogoslovsky: *Self-government in Northern Russia during the 17th century*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1910-1912. Applications of the same "shareholding" principle can also be found in Ukraine during the 17th and 18th centuries. See V. A. Myakotin: *Essays on the social history of Ukraine during the 17th and 18th centuries*, Prague, 1924-1926; also A. Miller: "Considérations sur le développement des institutions agraires de l'Ukraine au XVII et au XVIII siècle, in *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, Nos. IX-X, Sept.-Oct., 1928.

⁸ For instance, I. D. Beliaev: *The Peasants in Russia*, in-8°, Moscow, 1860, and many others.

⁹ For details see A. Miller: *Essai sur les institutions agraires de la Russie Centrale du XVI au XVIII siècles*, 8°, Paris, 1926, where a more detailed bibliography may be found.

capital accumulated during wars and raids, this capital consisting to a large extent of slaves. Thus the course of events in England and Russia was very different from what happened in France. Indeed, in this latter country the manorial régime was the result of an adaptation of the old Romano-Gallic individual landholding system, the Romano-Gallic "villa" having been transformed in the course of time into the "domaine" of the Frankish and Carolingian epochs, whereas both in England and in Russia privileged property was newly created at the expense of free communal lands, in favour of princes and kings and of the upper categories of their military followers.

(b) *Villeinage in England ; serfdom in Muscovy.*

The other important point, as I have just mentioned, is that proprietary rights were indissolubly connected with administrative, judicial and political rights, so that the privileged landholders obtained a direct sway over the inhabitants of their lands. This brings us to the very important question of the origin of medieval serfdom. It was only in the second half of the 16th century that Russian serfdom appeared for the first time as a fully-developed institution of Public Law. Until recently it was admitted by Russian historians that prior to this time the agricultural population of manorial lands was formed by a very small minority of personal and complete slaves of the landlords, and by a great majority of completely free peasants, who established themselves on these lands in virtue of free bilateral contracts. At the expiration of these contracts the peasants were at liberty to sever all relations with their landlords and to go elsewhere. Then, during the period 1550 to 1650, the peasants gradually lost this right of free departure ("droit de désaveu," to use a French term), and this loss was considered to have been the most important, almost the unique, factor which brought about the formation of Russian serfdom, or as it is characteristically called, the "attachment" of the peasantry. All the other rights of the landlords over their peasants were deemed to have originated from this "attachment." Many skilful theories were worked out by Russian historians, to explain the reasons which brought about this radical change in the situation of the Russian peasantry. Some of them emphasised the importance of the legislative action of the Government,¹⁰ whereas others laid stress upon the general economic and social conditions of the country

¹⁰ For instance, Sergeyevich. See S. Sergeyevich: *Russian juridica antiquities*, 3 vols., 8°, 1890-1903, St. Petersburg.

during this period.¹¹ All these theories, however, had to take into consideration the fact that, whereas in most West European countries the general situation of the peasantry considerably improved during the latter part of the Middle Ages and the beginning of Modern Times, it became decidedly worse in Muscovy. This naturally only strengthened the idea that the Russian mode of development was entirely different from the western one, and that the peculiarities of this development were to be explained by specifically Russian conditions which were unknown to any other country.

Now, if we come back to our original statement that there existed a chronological gap of about four centuries as between Russia and England, the consolidation of Russian serfdom during the period 1550-1650 ceases to be a surprising fact. Indeed, the period 1150-1250 can be considered as the classical age of English villeinage,¹² and I hope to prove that the consolidation of serfdom both in England and Russia was due to the same general causes. Meanwhile, let us note that long before the second part of the 16th century Russian privileged landholders held important judicial rights over the population of their lands. These judicial immunities are comparable with the English "soke"; and, in addition to them, there also existed fiscal and general administrative immunities, all of which were due to princely grants and originated as a consequence of the incapacity of the princes to govern the territories of their principalities in a more direct way. In fact, during this epoch, government and economic exploitation were so closely connected that whenever proprietary rights or rights of economic exploitation over a certain territory were conceded to anybody, this was practically always accompanied by the cession of judicial and fiscal rights.¹³ In this way the use of immunities became a very ordinary method of government. In addition to these rights resulting from private statutes of the princes, economic and social relations between the landowners and their peasants within the manors also frequently resulted in the establishment of a direct and personal dependency of the peasants upon the landlords.¹⁴ These latter frequently

¹¹ The indebtedness of peasants was especially studied by Klyuchevsky. See V. O. Klyuchevsky: "Origin of serfdom in Russia," in *Russian Thought*, 1885. Also his later works. Other aspects of the social condition of the peasants were studied by M. Dyakonov: *Essays on the history of the rural population in the Muscovite State*, 8°. St. Petersburg, 1898.

¹² See, for instance, Sir Paul Vinogradov: *Villainage in England*, 8°, Oxford, 1892.

¹³ S. B. Veselovsky: *The origin of the manorial régime*, 8°, Moscow, 1926.

¹⁴ See the works quoted under ¹¹ and ¹³.

appear as protectors and creditors of the peasants; and thus already during the 13th and 14th centuries we hear of entire classes of rural population, representatives of which, without being regular serfs, still had already lost some of their original freedom, either as debtors to the landlords or because they had exchanged the insecurity of freedom against the patronage of feudal lords. Thus the rural population of Russian manors during the Middle Ages consisted of a multitude of small social divisions ranging from complete slaves to almost entirely independent freemen, ranging through several other categories presenting various shades of semi-dependency. All these various categories were later welded into one uniform class of "serfs" or "attached peasants." Therefore the "attachment" of the peasants in the latter part of the 16th century was not the origin of Russian serfdom but, on the contrary, the final stage in the formation of an institution, separate elements of which had already existed for several centuries before. This summary description must bring to our minds very familiar pictures of the origin of English villainage, which was also consolidated into a regular social institution by the welding together of the various semi-dependent categories of rural population, which had existed under the last Saxon and the Danish kings, into one uniform class of "villeins" during the early part of the Angevin epoch.¹⁵

Political Aspect of Feudalism.

We shall now pass on to the political aspect of feudalism. A brief description of the political organisation of Muscovy at the close of the 14th century will help us to decide whether Muscovy during this epoch was a feudal state.

The territory of North-eastern Russia was at this time divided into a great number of principalities. At the head of the Russian princes, as their general overlord, stood the Grand Duke of Vladimir and Moscow. His own territories were composed of two parts:— (1) as general overlord of all Russia, he owned the grand duchy of Vladimir, and (2) as hereditary territorial prince, he owned a part of the principality of Moscow.

The other Russian princes can be conveniently subdivided into three groups. The first group would include representatives of collateral branches of the house of Moscow who owned other parts of the principality of Moscow. Although they were independent territorial princes by right of hereditary succession, they recognised

¹⁵ See F. W. Maitland: *Domesday Book and Beyond*, in-8°, Cambridge, 1897; also various works by Vinogradov.

the overlordship of the Grand Duke. The second group would be formed by scores of small local potentates, principally in the North-Eastern districts, who, although in principle independent rulers of their principalities, still came under the general sphere of influence of the Grand Duke of Moscow and acted in many respects as his vassals. The third group would consist of entirely independent princes, who only recognised a vague national leadership of the Grand Duke of Moscow, their mutual relations being governed by bilateral treaties and not by oaths of feudal allegiance. These independent princes also styled themselves Grand Dukes, and within the territories of their principalities they were overlords of a number of local territorial princes, just as the Grand Duke of Moscow was the overlord of his own territorial princes.

Thus a rather complex system of feudal disintegration existed at this time in Russia, whereas the system of vassalage was on the whole less developed than in some West European countries. The fact that all these princes were descendants of one ancestor, so that the splitting up of Russian territory into principalities was the result of family divisions, proves only that some aspects in the process of feudalisation were peculiar to Russia; but it does not prove that the political structure of the country was not a feudal one.

The relatively greater independence of some of the Russian princes can hardly be used as an argument against the existence of feudalism in Russia, since it is now generally admitted that political disruption is a far more fundamental characteristic of feudalism than the niceties of vassalage. In England, too, the rules of vassalage took their final shape only under the Norman kings, i.e. when the disruptive tendencies of feudalism which had manifested themselves so strongly under the last Saxon and Danish kings had already been checked by the centralising effects of the Norman Conquest.

As time went on, the Grand Duchy of Vladimir gradually became hereditary in the house of the Muscovite princes. Simultaneously the smaller feudal princes gradually lost the remnants of their former independence and became simple privileged landowners, their purely political rights passing over to Moscow. The large feudal princes held out somewhat longer against the unifying policy of the central power, but in the end they also had to submit to the growing power of the Grand Duke. This happened during the reign of Ivan III, the first Grand Duke of Moscow, who adopted the title of Tsar in the second half of the 15th century.

All the above leads to the conclusion that up to the end of the 15th century Russia had known both the social and the political

aspects of feudalism, and, therefore, could be characterised as a feudal country. This also fits in with our general scheme of Russian history, according to which there existed a gap of roughly 400 years as between Russia and England, so that the final unification of Russia under Ivan III and Basil III must be taken to roughly coincide with the epoch of the first Norman kings in England.

The end of political feudalism in England and Muscovy.

We shall now pass over to another epoch which succeeded the feudal age and which is a transition period between feudalism and the formation of the modern State. In England this period extends from the Norman Conquest to the reign of Edward I, and in Russia the corresponding period embraces the time from the reign of Ivan III to about the middle of the 17th century. This epoch is characterised in each of these countries by the strengthening of the central power, by the struggle of this power against the political element of feudalism, and by the rapid rise of a new class of small landholders, which in many respects was the principal support of the growing royal power.

The main features of this historical process were identical in both countries at a distance of 400 years between them. Since the strength of the feudatories was based on their territorial possessions, the central governments in England and Russia seized every opportunity of destroying these strongholds of feudalism, which resulted in constant wholesale or individual measures of confiscation. In England these measures were carried out by the Conqueror both after the battle of Senlac, and after the revolt of the Barons, by the Red King, by Henry I, and also by Stephen and Henry II after the treaty of Wallingford.¹⁶ In Muscovy wholesale confiscations of privileged lands were made by Ivan III, especially after the incorporation of Novgorod and various independent principalities into the Grand Duchy of Moscow. Confiscations on a large scale were also practised by Basil III; but probably the most famous system of wholesale confiscations was put into practice by Ivan the Terrible and is known under the name of "oprichnina." To most of his contemporaries the "oprichnina" of Ivan the Terrible seemed to be only an instrument of tyranny and arbitrary oppression. It is only recent historical research and particularly the works of Platonov¹⁷ which have cleared up the hidden agrarian and political

¹⁶ See, for instance, W. Stubbs : *Constitutional History of England*, 3 vols., 16°, Oxford.

¹⁷ See particularly, S. F. Platonov : *Ivan the Terrible*, 16°, Prague, 1924.

significance of this system, whereby the central government assumed and attained direct control over entire provinces of the State and undertook a complete, although perhaps not very systematic, redistribution of all the lands in these provinces, eradicating completely all centres of possible feudal opposition.

But these measures were not limited to simple confiscations. At the same time the whole system of landownership was changed. Since, at this stage of general development, political power and landownership were still intimately bound together, the strengthening of the central political authority could only be achieved by conferring upon it the character of supreme landholder in the State. Completely independent, allodial landownership gradually disappears; and the monarch is considered to have supreme proprietary rights over all the lands in the realm, and all the other landholders are deemed to receive their lands from him either directly as the tenants-in-chief, or indirectly.¹⁸ It is rather curious to note that in England the final elaboration of the rules of feudal tenure brought about a strengthening of the royal power, depriving the feudal lords of their previous independence, and was, in fact, used as a means to this end. In Muscovy the same general process took place and, although no elaborate theory of feudal tenure was ever created, the landowning character of the Muscovite monarchy was perhaps even more deeply rooted in all the institutions of the Muscovite State than was the case in England.¹⁹ In France this general process had been somewhat different. The rules of feudal tenure were worked out in France as a consequence of the triumph of feudal disintegration—that is, before the rise of the royal power. When, later on, the royal power in France began to increase, it found its principal support in the “*bourgeoisie*,” and not so much in the landowning middle class. Therefore the social and economic foundations of royalty in France were very different from what they had been both in England and Muscovy in the 12th and 16th centuries, respectively.

While the growing monarchies of England and Muscovy were thus engaged in a deadly struggle with the disruptive forces of feudalism, they had to seek for support in other classes of society. The lands confiscated from the feudal barons and also vast tracts of communal lands were now being distributed to small landholders under the obligation of military service. The necessity of keeping up a large territorial army and the impossibility of relying exclusively

¹⁸ See W. Stubbs : *op. cit.*

¹⁹ See A. E. Presnyakov : *op. cit.*

on mercenary troops, for which the Treasury had not yet at its disposal sufficient financial means, acted as a powerful motive for prompting this agrarian policy in both countries. This was the origin of the class of "knights" in England in the 13th²⁰ and of the "men of service" in Moscow in the 16th century.²¹ These general tendencies manifested themselves rather early both in England and Muscovy, but it was not until the reign of Henry II and that of Ivan the Terrible that a concrete legislative sanction was given to them. In this respect the various legislative measures of Henry II and particularly the Assize of Arms of 1181²² bear a striking resemblance to the laws of Ivan the Terrible issued in 1564.²³ Both series of measures aimed at one object, namely, the organisation of a territorial army, based on a conditional landholding system, and, in our opinion, the English "knight's fee" is the exact counterpart of the Muscovite "pomestye," such as it existed during the second half of the 16th century. In both cases the amount of land held determined the amount and character of military service due, and this military service was due directly to the King or the Tsar.

The creation of the "pomestye" system, as above described, brought about a considerable extension of privately owned lands. Communal lands almost disappeared in the central parts of Muscovy and remained only in the extreme North, where, thanks to the absence of any military danger, this system had never been introduced. At the same time the large allodial lands of "votchiny" of the former independent feudals were subdivided into a great number of small "pomestya" or small "knight's fees." All this naturally placed the rural population under the direct sway of their new lords, and recent historians generally admit that the extension of the "pomestye" system was the principal general cause which brought about the consolidation of Russian serfdom during the second half of the 16th century. The similarity with England is rather striking, since English villeinage was consolidated during the second half of the 12th century as a general consequence of the gradual rise of the class of knights.

The growth of the royal power in England and Muscovy brought

²⁰ See, for instance, Sir Paul Vinogradov: *English Society in the 11th century*, 8°, Oxford, 1908, also his other works, and W. Stubbs: *op. cit.*

²¹ See A. Miller: under 10, where a more complete bibliography is referred to.

²² See above quoted works of W. Stubbs, P. Vinogradov, C. R. L. Fletcher, etc.

²³ See A. V. Borodin: "Law of 1556 regarding service" in *Collection of articles on Russian history dedicated to S. F. Platonov*, 8°, Petersburg (sic), 1922.

about the necessity of creating organs of central administration; and in this respect again, the 11th and 12th centuries in England offer many parallelisms with the 16th century in Muscovy. In England such offices as the Justiciarship, the Chancery and the Exchequer gradually emerge from previous confusion and take a more or less definite shape during the reigns of the Norman and of the first Angevin kings.²⁴ In the Kremlin of Moscow a rather complex system of central administrative institutions called "prikazy" gradually comes into being during the reigns of Basil III, Ivan the Terrible and Boris Godunov.

The necessities of legislation and of financial administration finally compelled the central power in both countries to convene representatives of various classes of society to general assemblies, the forerunners of our modern parliaments. The first of these assemblies, called "Zemskie Sobory," which were deemed to represent the opinion of the "entire country," were called in Moscow in the middle of the 16th century. This can be taken as a definite proof that Muscovy was at that time no longer a feudal State and was gradually transforming itself into a modern monarchy.²⁵ Thus we have now seen that, due allowance being given to the chronological difference of about four centuries, the social and political development of England and Muscovy proceeded in many respects along the same general lines, and that the general structure of Muscovy at the end of the 16th century closely resembled that of England at the very beginning of the 13th century.

The Crisis of the "Time of Troubles."

The question may now be asked how it happened that in the subsequent course of events the general lines of development of England and Russia diverged so much, with the result that during the 17th century Russia was transformed into an autocratic monarchy, whereas England under Edward I already presented all the rudiments of a parliamentary State. An answer to this question can be found in a study of the events which happened in Russia during the years 1598 to 1614, generally known as the Time of Troubles,²⁶ and in a comparison of these events with the reigns of John Lackland and Henry III in England.

²⁴ See W. Stubbs : *op. cit.*

²⁵ For the history of the "Zemskie Sobory," see V. Latkin : *The Zemskie Sobory of old Russia*, 8°, St. Petersburg, 1885; also S. Sergeyevich : *op. cit.* (see under 11).

²⁶ See S. F. Platonov : *Essays on the history of the Time of Troubles*, 8°, St. Petersburg, 1899, also his later works : *Boris Godunov*, 16°, Prague, 1924, and *The Time of Troubles*, 16°, Prague, 1924.

As soon as the old Rurik dynasty of the Tsars of Moscow became extinct with the death of Tsar Fedor, the only surviving son of Ivan the Terrible, all the opposing social forces, which had been held in submission by the strong governments of Ivan and Boris Godunov, the brother-in-law of Fedor, broke out into a violent and lasting conflict, which can properly be described as the first Russian revolution. The remnants of the feudal aristocracy attempted to regain the importance which they had lost, first by putting on the throne one of their own representatives, and by extracting from him an oath to observe a charter of liberties, which reminds one of Magna Charta. When this attempt failed, they took the government into their own hands and negotiated with the son of the King of Poland, trusting that this would be the best means whereby a Tsar could be secured who would be a puppet in the hands of the feudal oligarchy. Simultaneously, the oppressed peasants and slaves rose against their lords and a civil war broke out. Things were still more complicated by various dynastic pretenders and by foreign intervention, the Poles and Swedes having occupied a large part of the Russian territory. The Poles even captured the city of Moscow. The very existence of Muscovy as an independent national State was threatened. Help came finally from the small landholders, the military middle class, who, in conjunction with the burgesses of the trading centres of the Volga region, organised a national levy, drove the Poles out of Moscow, pacified and subdued the revolted peasants and finally crowned their work by electing a new Tsar, Michael Romanov, to the throne of Moscow. The victory of the military middle classes, the "men of service," was complete: the feudal aristocracy never recovered from the loss of prestige and the charge of treason which its representatives incurred after the unsuccessful negotiations with the King of Poland and his son. The new Tsar reigned with the help of the middle classes, and legislative assemblies were often called by him, as well as by his son, the Tsar Alexis. But, when the work of financial and administrative reorganisation was completed, when all the social desiderata of the landowning middle classes had been fulfilled, these assemblies were gradually discontinued and Muscovite autocracy received its final shape. This change is easy to explain. Indeed, the only class, which at this stage of general development would have been interested in taking an active part in the political government of the country, would have been a strong aristocracy with deeply-rooted local traditions. This class had been completely crushed, whereas the middle classes, once their social programme was carried out, peace-

fully retired from the government of the country, leaving it entirely in the hands of the absolute Tsar. They took part in the national affairs no longer as a self-conscious class, but only as individual members of the Muscovite bureaucracy.

Origins of Muscovite autocracy and English parliamentaryism.

All this is entirely different from what happened in England during the 13th century. In Muscovy the Tsar was a national leader, whose power had gradually increased during the process of the unification of the national territory and in constant defensive wars against foreigners, first the Tartars, then the Poles and the Swedes, who were continually threatening the integrity of this territory. Even the offensive wars, such as, for instance, the unsuccessful Livonian wars of Ivan the Terrible, had a vital national importance, since they aimed at securing for Russia an outlet towards the Baltic Sea. In this way the Tsar was the symbol of national independence and union, and, in addition, he was also the spiritual leader of the nation, since the Russian Church early acquired an almost complete independence from the See of Constantinople. This further strengthened the close union of State and Church which always existed in Russia. It is for this reason that when the feudal aristocracy, having become class-conscious, made an attempt not so much to restore the previous feudal disintegration as to limit the power of the Tsar in their own favour as a class, they were not supported by the nation at large and their attempt collapsed entirely after having received the stigma of national treason.

In England, on the contrary, most of the Norman and the first Angevin kings were really foreigners.²⁷ Their chief personal interests lay on the Continent, and these interests were purely dynastic, entirely distinct from the vital, national interests of the English people. The constant wars, which were waged by these kings, especially in France, were not wars of national defence or expansion, but were for the most part simple dynastic conflicts, and these kings looked upon England as a kind of reservoir of military and financial means, which they could utilise in order to achieve their dynastic aims. Neither could these English kings act as spiritual leaders of the English nation, since the Roman Catholic Church in England was not a national institution and whenever the English kings acted in close alliance with, and even in submission to, the

²⁷ This feature is very well brought out in K. Norgate's works. See, for instance, K. Norgate : *England under the Angevin Kings*, 2 vols., 8°, 1887.

Papal power, as, for instance, John Lackland and Henry III (Sicilian affairs), these acts always assumed the character of a betrayal of national interests. When the English baronage rose to national maturity and class-consciousness, it made an attempt to limit the power of the king, not by reinstating feudal anarchy as under Stephen, but by an act of general legislation—the Magna Charta. This attempt received the support of the entire nation, and the Barons played the part of national leaders against the tyranny and misgovernment of a semi-foreign king. These features came into still greater prominence during the Barons' War under Henry III,²⁸ when the progressive part of the baronage, led by Simon de Montfort, acted in close co-operation with the military middle class and only obtained their victory over the royal power as a result of the support of the "communitas bachellariæ." It is certain that in the middle of the 13th century in England, just as in Russia during the 17th century, the only class which was interested in the purely political issues at stake was the higher rank of the baronage, but in England the *social* programme of the middle classes was carried out thanks to the *political* victory of the upper class, whereas in Russia this upper class had been entirely crushed during the Time of the Troubles. In short, in England the play of historical contingencies brought about an alliance of the upper and middle classes against the royal power, whereas in Russia these historical contingencies brought about an alliance of the middle classes with the Tsar's power against the remnants of the feudal aristocracy. The final result was the creation of a parliamentary system of government in England, and of a politically unlimited autocracy in Russia.

Conclusions.

I shall consider that I have achieved my object if I have succeeded in proving that, admitting that about four centuries separate the identical phases in the historical development of England and of Muscovy during the Middle Ages, this development proceeded on very similar general lines, and that the study of these similarities should be of much value both to English and to Russian historical research. It would help to give this research a wider, more scientific and truly sociological character.

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²⁸ See R. F. Treharne: *The Baronial Plan of Reform, 1258–1263*, 8vo, Manchester, 1932.